

# Christian Combat - What to Do With God's Armor

by David Guzik

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*The strength of God is essential for spiritual warfare, and prayer is the means by which the armor of God is activated.*

**Duration:** 25:22

**Scripture:** Ephesians 6:10-20

**Topics:** "Spiritual Warfare", "Gospel Preaching"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of combining clarity and boldness in preaching the gospel. He highlights that some preachers may have clarity but lack boldness, while others may have boldness but lack clarity. The speaker references Ephesians 6:19-20, where Paul prays for utterance and boldness to make known the mystery of the gospel. The sermon concludes by discussing the concept of spiritual warfare and the need for Christians to be equipped with the whole armor of God to stand against the devil's schemes.

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## Transcript

This morning we're in Ephesians chapter 6 again, and we're finishing up a six-part series That we've been following through on on Sunday mornings that we've called the two pillars of Christian combat it's a series on what we might call spiritual warfare a time when people get together and we take a look at the word and we say God has put us in a battlefield and We want to be equipped We want to be Outfitted to not only endure in that battle but to succeed in it And so we started several weeks ago at Ephesians chapter 6 verse 10 this morning We're going to focus on verses 8 through 20 and talk about what to do with the armor of God But let's start by just taking a look at verse 10.

I'm going to read through the whole passage Ephesians chapter 6 verses 10 through 20 where we read Finally my brethren be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood but against principalities against powers against the rulers of the darkness of this age against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places Therefore take up the whole armor of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day and having done all to stand Stand therefore having girded your waist with truth Having put on the breastplate of righteousness and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace above all taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts

of the wicked one and Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the spirit, which is the Word of God Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the Saints and For me that utterance may be given to me That I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel For which I am an ambassador in change That in and I may speak boldly as I ought to speak, you know at the beginning of this series We saw how important it was when you're talking about the combat that we're in as Christians Not to begin with the armor of God I think you have to begin at even a more fundamental starting place You have to begin with having the strength of God in your life after all look at verse 10 Finally my brethren be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might You could have the most marvelous armor in the world But if you don't have the strength underneath that armor to use it and to wield it properly It's going to be a very little use to you And so the two pillars of Christian combat are not only the armor of God But also right next to it The second pillar is the strength of God in our life and God wants to fill you with his strength He wants you to be strong in the power of his might.

That's quite a promise And so he invites you to draw on the resources of his might of his power and having done that Then Paul goes on to tell us a little bit about the dynamic of spiritual battle that we're in Who our foe is and what we should know about him But then he tells us to take up the whole armor of God and let's say you've done all of that There you are.

You're strong Man, you're just strong in the Lord The strength is somehow pulsating through your whole being and as you sit and look at me right now You're strong in the Lord and then let's say you know something about your enemy and you've got some education there and you're smart And you're looking at it. You've got some perception there You're strong and you're smart and then next you've got the armor of God on Wow. Do you look great? There's that breastplate of righteousness.

It's just gleaming You got the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God from top to bottom. You're equipped But if you're like me, you know what it's like to experience this as a Christian sometimes You have the strength you have the smarts. You have the armor and you feel like you're all dressed up with nowhere to go So, all right.

Now, what do I do? Well, it's very simple. Look at it verse 18 you pray Praying always with all prayer and supplication the Spirit being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the Saints Let me just say very simply the armor of God goes into action through prayer and supplication That's how it gets going We exercise truth. We exercise righteousness the preparation of the gospel faith Salvation and the Word of God and we submit to God and resist the devil in prayer So if you have it all The strength the smarts the equipping of the armor of God and if you never pray You're exactly in that place of being all dressed up and nowhere to go Now, do you see where this is sort of Satan's last-ditch effort to deceive us and to divert us to make us less effective You've been smart enough to get the strength you've learned about the enemy You know what you need to do for that equipping now Whatever he can do to simply get you to stop praying or to never get praying then he's won his victory You see oftentimes we don't pray the way we should or no, but let me just speak for myself Oftentimes, I don't pray the way that I should Beyond all the excuses.

I'm good at making excuses for prayer You know, well, why didn't I pray? Well, I was too busy Why didn't I pray because I pray all the time Why didn't I pray because I did pray but my prayer was like, oh lord bless this. Thank you very much. Bye Now, you know the real reason so often why I don't pray It's because beyond all the spiritual excuses that I like to make the reality of the matter is that I'm depending on myself

And not on the Lord Prayer is dependent on God in action prayer Expresses our spiritual dependence if you really depend on God you're going to be praying Now if you're really depending on something else you'll seek that But when we really depend on God not just in ideas, but in action in our life It will drive us to pray and oftentimes we simply or I simply just don't pray because I'm overconfident in my own abilities That can be deadly in warfare Winston Churchill said to Britain in the early days of the Second World War He said I must drop one word of caution for next to cowardice and treachery Overconfidence leading to neglect and laziness is the worst of wartime crimes a Lot of us as Christians are guilty of the worst of wartime crimes in the spiritual warfare that we're in we have Overconfidence and it leads us to neglect and slothfulness And instead what we need to do is get to prayer Get to prayer when it comes to the spiritual battle that we're in the midst of now you say but David things are going pretty Well in my life right now.

I don't sense this great need to depend on God in prayer So I mean, I guess just a normal sort of cruising prayer life is good enough Well, then may I challenge you if you don't feel that need to be so diligent in prayer for your own needs Then how about the needs of someone else? Because what this text tells us that's very exciting is that we can battle spiritually on behalf of others Look at it right there in verse 18 praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication Only for your own needs. Is that what it says at the end of verse 18? No, it says for all the Saints Isn't that remarkable? That God has given you the strength he's given you this insight into spiritual battle and he's given you the armor of God Yes to battle in things that are relevant to your own life directly, but also to battle in prayer for others we spiritually battle not only on our own behalf, but also on behalf of others and You may be riding on such a high Spiritual plane that you don't need to take out the strength of God and the smarts of God and the armor of God to fight your own battles if that's you Contact me right after church. I'd like to give you my job because you're a place where I I wish I was But even if that was you then you should still be putting it into action for the sake of others And so we need to pray Matter of fact if you take a look at it Paul speaks of it very pointedly in verse 11 verse 19 He says and for me that utterance may be given to me that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel Sometimes I get a little bit cynical and I was reading this past and I was thinking I wonder if Paul had an ulterior motive in teaching these Ephesian Christians all about the strength of God and the dynamic of spiritual battle and all about the Armor of God, maybe he had an ulterior motive and the only thing he was really interested in was getting them to pray more effectively for him That might have been it because he kind of throws it in there at the end and for me Well, I wouldn't mind if you prayed for me, too You see after bringing up the idea that spiritual warfare can be waged on behalf of others Paul then asks his readers to pray for him.

I want you to think about it for a moment Paul asked his readers to pray for now What did he ask for prayer for that? He would have it easy that he would have it comfortable that the shackles around his wrist would be released That that maybe he'd be released from his imprisonment. No He says I want you to pray that I would have the strength to boldly make known the mystery of the gospel Paul knew that shortly in this Roman imprisonment He was going to appear before Caesar himself and was going to be invited to present his case before Caesar Well, you couldn't give the Apostle Paul an opportunity like that without him proclaiming the gospel And so this is what on his mind he we can imagine Paul asking for many things He could say what will give me relief from my imprisonment pray that they set me free Pray that I'm more comfortable here pray that I get chained to a nice soldier instead of the rude guy that I was chained to last time He could pray about anything but he says no No, I have a responsibility as an ambassador of the gospel And so please pray for me and what did he want prayer for look verse 19? That utterance may be given to me now the idea behind that word that's translated in our Bibles utterance is clear Speaking Paul

said I want to speak clearly when I'm given the opportunity But that's not all take a look at their mind in verse 19 That utterance may be given to me and then I may open my out my mouth Boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel. I think Paul really knew what makes for a good preacher of the gospel Clarity and boldness So he said pray for me that I would have both of those things, you know without clarity and boldness I don't think a good job gets done in preaching the gospel.

Some guys have one or the other. Oh, there's guys have tremendous clarity Hair splitting clarity. They make things so clear and so defined but but maybe there's no boldness there and so it's just kind of a monotone kind of thing and they're just saying they've talked in the same tone all the time and Hardly take a breath and they just let him in pretty soon Everybody's lulled to sleep and it's clear as anything, but nobody got anything Then you got other folks, you know, they well, they're not very they're not very clear But man, did they got boldness? Wow, are they both man? They got up into the pulpit It looks like they're fighting a swarm of bees while they're preaching and man, it's bold It's out there and everybody's all excited.

So wow, this is fantastic And then as soon as the sermon ends you go what exactly did he say? I don't remember anything because there's no clarity to it But friends when you combine Clarity with boldness then the Word of God really goes out effectively and that's exactly what Paul prayed for He said pray for me that utterance may be given to me that I may open my mouth Boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel This was so important to Paul He knew that he had an important opportunity and so he says listen Let me teach you about this dynamic of spiritual battle be strong in the Lord Have the wisdom to know what's going on in the battle around you equip yourself in the armor of God Then fight for the things you need to fight for in your life fight for others, but then pray for me He came back to it again and again pray for me pray for me He wanted to proclaim the gospel Clearly and fearlessly So he asked them to pray for him. I Know you might think I'm belaboring this point, but it impresses me so much. Maybe maybe almost for selfish reasons I want you to think about it again Paul Wanted them to pray for him the Apostle Paul St. Paul You know that Paul now if Paul Felt that he depended on the prayers of others for strength and clarity and boldness in his ministry What about me? What about David Guzik if Saul of Tarsus needed it? How much more do I? So friends I look at you and just flat-out I plead with you to pray for me I mean after all if we regard what God wants to do and is doing among us if we regard it as a genuinely spiritual work Not not just something that that anybody could do without an ounce of the Holy Spirit Just you know something having to do with demographics or marketing or promotions or that if that's all it is Well, then I guess we don't need to pray But if we want to see the hand of God at work Then we pray And I beg you to pray for me I Feel so encouraged so strengthened when I know that people pray for me But I know that it goes far beyond what I feel I know that behind the scenes God is doing a work through the prayers of his people To make me more effective in what I can do for you through your diligent prayers So think about it again.

I hope this haunts you at night if the Apostle Paul needed prayer. How much more does Pastor David and Then you pray for me and you pray for other spiritual leaders that God has put in your life Does God has a special call for someone like Paul look at he mentions it here in verse 20 He says for which I am an ambassador in chains that in it I may speak boldly as I ought to speak in other words Paul says I'm an ambassador in chains that you know what an ambassador is of course an ambassador is someone sent out from one country to another Country and in the distant country that the ambassador lives he represents his own country And Paul says that's what I am I'm an ambassador from the kingdom of God and I've been sent to another country and right now his place where his Ambassadors post was well it was in in the Roman prison where he was at That was his ambassadors headquarters the embassy where he

was so to speak Here I am. I'm God's ambassador And I want to make sure that I give God's message You know that's what the job in an ambassador is isn't it to relay the message from his government the ambassadors doesn't speak for himself Here you are you the ambassador of the United States to China And you go over to China and you're there to speak to the Chinese officials And you're there speaking and negotiating some kind of point, and then you just decide well You know I don't really like this policy that my government does let me try to swing this on my own They'll recall you immediately won't you you'll be recalled because they don't really care what your opinion is You're there to represent your government ladies and we're here to represent the government of the kingdom of God Just like the Apostle Paul was I'm excited.

I'm looking out at a room full of ambassadors. I never felt so important in my life there You are here. You're all ambassadors God has sent you out as delegates of his kingdom to a special Embassy to a special place where you can reach that other people can't reach and he wants you to be his representative right there Each one of us has an important place in God's government so to speak in his kingdom And you are his representative out there to show others What God wants to do in this world and in their lives? So mr. Ambassador or mrs. Ambassador Do you see that that you're just like Paul was and so you need prayer as well Don't you it all comes back to our spiritual dependence on the Lord God? It's also interesting what he says here in verse 20.

He makes sort of a play on words He says for which I am an ambassador in chains Now the word that Paul used for chains Of course, it could mean a prisoner shackles But it was also used in a different context that very same word for chains could be used for the gold ornament that was worn around the neck or the wrist of an ambassador and so you think of a you know an Ambassadors of party we know where he receives people at a state dinner or something and there's the ambassador He has a very dignified fancy gold chain around his neck or maybe around his wrist it showed that he was wealthy and Powerful and those ambassadors wore those chains to show the riches and the power and the dignity of the government they represented They said well look how rich my government is back home. You see the chains. I wear these are the chains around me I Think Paul's making a very clever play on words here He's holding up his prisoners shackles, and he says these are my glorious ambassadors change This is my decoration.

This is my ornament from my government See my government isn't like the other governments of this world my government expresses its strength through servanthood and sometimes through suffering and That's the country that Paul was an ambassador of so Paul saw himself as an ambassador And he wanted prayer as an ambassador so that he could speak boldly as he ought to speak So friends let me just speak for a four moments now on what difference this should make for us in our life Shouldn't this make all the difference when we realize how ready God is to help us He's given you his strength. He's made it available to you He's given you wisdom about the spiritual battle that you find yourself in he's given you an equipping of his own armor Now he wants to answer those prayers. He wants to help you he wants to be your guide God hasn't given you the gift of prayer and the power of prayer just sort of tease you or torture you You say well, I don't get it.

I've been praying for this is that for such a long time, and it still hasn't happened yet well, then keep praying and Trust that God will show you either to stop praying or to show you more specifically how to pray and Especially in the midst of those prayers ask him to change your heart You know friends I have found this in my own walk before God That's so often when I thought that prayer was a matter of sort of Persuading a reluctant God to do what I wanted him to do You know like the teenager trying to wrangle

the keys from dad's hands, you know dad's reluctant But the teenagers will if I ask enough or if I ask in the right way Maybe I can get it from all so forth and so on no no no wipe that picture out of your mind completely What Hinders prayer isn't God's reluctance. It's the fact that sometimes my heart and my mind aren't in alignment with his That's where I want my heart to be that's where I want my mind to be so God bring it to that place through prayer Friends God wants to help us in prayer, but beyond that he wants to send us out But we have an important place in his government, but he wants to send us out as his own Ambassadors every one of us has our own country so to speak where we are his ambassadors And so you go out with that spiritual warfare, and you realize that the battle isn't just for yourself It isn't just for us Christian combat is something that we wage on behalf of others as well especially Especially leaders as Paul gave us the pattern Now the final thing that I think of about all of this is I know my own heart and my own weakness in many ways And I know that often it's easier for me to talk about prayer than to actually pray Do you notice that in your Christian life so many things? Well, we can talk about doing good for the poor. It's a lot easier than actually going out and doing it We can talk about prayer We can talk about giving we could talk about any number of things so much easier than doing it And I just felt we would be amiss this morning if we didn't just talk about prayer But actually prayed and so if I've asked some men in our church family They're going to come on up and I'm going to pray and the worship teams going to come up and sort of in between songs We'll just spend some time in prayer now.

Please understand this Have you ever wondered when somebody up here on the platform is praying what you're supposed to be doing And what are you supposed to do? He's supposed to sit there. Well, you know nice prayer read your Bible hold up a scorecard after the prairie No judges. My that was a spiritual prayer pastor, you know Well, you're you're sort of falling off on that prayer, you know, you could do better next time whatever No, the principle you need to grab a hold of is what the Bible calls the principle of agreement in prayer And the Bible is such heavy emphasis on this The idea is is when somebody stands before the congregation to pray.

He's not just praying for himself He's praying on behalf of the whole congregation and what the congregation is doing is not just listening to him pray Or it's not just thinking about lunch as soon as they get out of here They're agreeing with him in prayer As that person prays the the response in the heart is yes, Lord. Yes. God.

That's what we want to see happen Yes, God do that work in my life do that work among us and you say it silently or softly under your breath But the idea is is that you are mentally and spiritually engaged with the person praying Not just passively listening So, can we agree together in prayer and come before the Lord and have some time of prayer to conclude our service here this morning Lord God Lord teach us to pray Teach me to pray Lord. I Confess you before you and before these people that so often I feel lacking in prayer So often I look at my prayer life and and sometimes even when I I feel encouraged about it, Lord I look a little deeper and I see how much I depend upon myself and not on you Lord Teach me to pray God, I pray for all of us that you would make us a praying people Lord not for the purpose of being able to show off our prayer lives Not for the purpose of being able to tell others how much we pray But Lord as much as anything that it would be a pure Expression of our dependence upon you That we wouldn't lean upon the arm of man That we wouldn't lean upon the wisdom of man, but we would lean only on you Lord God apart from that there is no hope for us Apart from that Lord. We're just a Christian social club We're not content with that Lord We want to be your church we want to be your ambassadors we want this to be an embassy it's father help us now Teach us to pray and teach us to worship you Lord Help us now as we sing to to sing these songs unto you as if they're the prayer of our heart Not not words on a wall or

thoughts in our head The passionate gift of worship unto you Thank you Lord receive our praise in Jesus  
Amen

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